

**Opening Statement of the Honorable Joseph R. Pitts**  
**Subcommittee on Health**  
**Hearing on "A Review of Efforts to Prevent and Treat**  
**Traumatic Brain Injury"**  
**March 19, 2012**  
*(As prepared for delivery)*

As many of you know, March is "Brain Injury Awareness Month."

According to the CDC, an estimated 1.7 million people sustain a traumatic brain injury each year, and of that figure, 1.365 million, or 80 percent, are treated and released from the emergency room, 275,000 are hospitalized, and 52,000 will die.

TBI affects everyone.

It is not restricted to one race, gender, or socio-economic group. While children aged four and under and adults over the age of 75 are particularly at risk, brain injury affects soldiers, athletes, and even members of Congress, like our former colleague Gabby Giffords.

The annual cost of TBI is estimated at \$48 billion, but dollars alone do not paint a complete picture of the scope of these injuries.

It does not take into account the suffering of a person with a brain injury, who may be disabled for life, or the strain a loved one's TBI places on family members, who are so often care givers.

Federal efforts to address TBI began with the Traumatic Brain Injury Act of 1996. The act aimed to identify and increase awareness of TBI through new research and programs.

The TBI amendments of 2001 amended the 1996 law by extending the authorization to include the implementation of a national traumatic brain injury education and awareness campaign.

The Traumatic Brain Injury Act of 2008 reauthorized the program and also authorized CDC and NIH to conduct a study to examine the information gathered by HHS, assess appropriate interventions, and develop practice guidelines.

I look forward to the results of the study, which will come out in November of this year.

The 2008 Act also focused on the incidence and prevalence of TBI, uniform reporting, and linking individuals with TBI to support services and academic institutions to conduct research.

I would like to hear an assessment from each of our witnesses of these federal programs. What have we learned about the causes, diagnosis, and treatment of TBI through HHS' efforts? How is that knowledge being applied in real-world situations? I would also like to hear their ideas about where we should go from here.

I would like to say a special hello to Dr. Flaura Winston from the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. CHOP is a wonderful institution that has served many of my constituents.

I would also like to welcome those with us today who have TBI, as well as their families and caregivers who make enormous sacrifices every day. We're glad you're here.

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